Bumrah claims five as India seize advantage in first South Africa Test

KOLKATA: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah claimed a five-wicket haul as India bowled out South Africa for 159 on the opening day of the first cricket Test on Friday.

Electing to bat in Kolkata at the start of the two-match series, reigning world Test champions South Africa lost regular wickets and were bowled out off 55 overs.

In reply, India were 37-1 at stumps, trailing South Africa by 122 runs on a pitch that looked good for batting.

Left-arm quick Marco Jansen removed Yashasvi Jaiswal for 12 when the left-handed opener chopped a delivery on to his stumps.

With the red ball in use, even with the floodlights on, it grew so dark that play was halted early at the iconic Eden Gardens. KL Rahul was on 13 and left-handed Washington Sundar on six.

The visitors had suffered a setback even before a ball was bowled when their premier fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was ruled out with a rib injury.

"KG (Rabada) is a world class bowler," South African batting coach Ashwell Prince said. "So he'll definitely be missed on the surface, because I do think it is actually aiding the fast bowlers."

Rabada is under observation after he sustained the injury in the team's first training session on Tuesday and failed a fitness test on the morning of the opener.

Bumrah, who took his 16th five-wicket haul in Test cricket after, struck twice in the third over after tea.

Scoreboard

SOUTH AFRICA (1st Innings):
A. Markram c Pant b Bumrah ... 31
R. Rickelton b Bumrah ... 23
W. Mulder lbw Yadav ... 24
T. Bavuma c Jurel b Yadav ... 3
T. de Zorzi lbw Bumrah ... 24
T. Stubbs not out ... 15
K. Verreynne lbw Siraj ... 16
M. Jansen b Siraj ... 0
C. Bosch lbw Patel ... 3
S. Harmer b Bumrah ... 5
K. Maharaj lbw Bumrah ... 0
EXTRAS (B-8, LB-4, NB-1, W-2) ... 15
TOTAL (all out, 55 overs) ... 159
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-57 (Rickelton), 2-62 (Markram), 3-71 (Bavuma), 4-114 (Mulder), 5-120 (de Zorzi), 6-146 (Verreynne), 7-147 (Jansen), 8-154 (Bosch), 9-159 (Harmer)
BOWLING: Bumrah 14-5-27-5 (1w, 1nb), Siraj 12-0-47-2 (1w), Patel 6-2-21-1, Yadav 14-1-36-2, Jadeja 8-2-13-0, Sundar 1-0-3-0
INDIA (1st Innings):
Y. Jaiswal b Jansen ... 12
K. L. Rahul not out ... 13
W. Sundar not out ... 6
EXTRAS (LB-2, NB-4) ... 6
TOTAL (for one wicket, 20 overs) ... 37
FALL OF WICKET: 1-18 (Jaiswal)
STILL TO BAT: S. Gill, R. Pant, R. Jadeja, D. Jurel, A. Patel, K. Yadav, J. Bumrah, M. Siraj
BOWLING: Jansen 6-2-11-1 (2nb), Mulder 5-1-15-0 (2nb), Maharaj 5-1-8-0, Bosch 3-2-1-0, Harmer 1-1-0-0

After a 57-run stand between openers Aiden Markram and Ryan Rickelton, South Africa faltered against the Indian attack.

Kuldeep Yadav — one of the four spinners in the Indian XI — and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj took two wickets each.

Opening batter Markram took 23 deliveries to get off the mark but did so with a glorious straight drive for four off Siraj.

Spin was introduced in the eighth over with Axar Patel bowling his left-arm orthodox but Markram kept up the attack.

Bumrah (5-27) broke the opening stand when he bowled left-hander Rickelton for 23 to raise the noise of acrowd of around 36,000.

Bumrah then produced a gem to send back Markram, caught behind for 31 on a rising ball that hit the glove and returning wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant completed a diving catch.

Kuldeep kept up the bowling charge and had skipper Temba Bavuma caught at leg slip for three.

Wiaan Mulder and Tony de Zorzi — who both scored 24 — took the team past 100 and into lunch before Kuldeep trapped Mulder lbw with the batsman attempting a reverse sweep off the left-arm wrist spinner.

Bumrah ended de Zorzi's defiance lbw and the batter, like Mulder, wasted a review. Both showed the ball hitting the stumps.

Wickets kept tumbling as Siraj picked two in the space of four balls, with Kyle Verreynne lbw for 16 and Jansen bowled for a duck.—AFP

PAKISTAN batter Babar Azam plays a stroke during his century as Sri Lankan wicket-keeper Kusal Mendis looks on during the second One-day International at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday.—Tanveer Shahzad/White Star

Ton-up Babar takes Pakistan to series-clinching win over SL

By Kashif Abbasi

RAWALPINDI: Babar Azam finally ended his 807-day wait for a One-day International century, scoring an unbeaten 102 to lead Pakistan to an eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the second match here at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday, sealing the three-match series with a game to spare.

The former Pakistan skipper, under intense scrutiny after 83 innings without a three-figure score, struck eight boundaries in a 119-ball innings that blended patience with poise.

He reached his milestone in the 47th over, pulling pacer Pramod Madushan to midwicket for a single, before collapsing to his knees in prostration and embracing Mohammad Rizwan at the non-striker's end. The Rawalpindi crowd erupted, having waited long for this moment.

Reaching the milestone, Babar equalled former opener Saeed Anwar's record for the most ODI hundreds for Pakistan — 20 centuries.

Rizwan played the ideal supporting role, remaining unbeaten on 51 off 54 balls, hitting five fours and a six. The pair added an unbroken 112 for the third wicket, guiding Pakistan across the finish line two balls into the 49th over.

The chase began explosively. Openers Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman raced to 77-0 in the powerplay. Saim smashed 33 off 25 balls (five fours and a six) before holing out to mid-off off pacer Dushmantha Chameera in the 10th over.

Fakhar, dropped thrice, anchored with 78 off 93 balls (eight fours and six) before falling to a superb low catch by Janith Liyanage at short midwicket off Chameera in the 31st.

Sri Lanka's fielding lapses proved decisive. Fakhar survived a skier spilled by substitute Pavan Rathnayake, a miscued loft dropped by Asitha Fernando at long-off off Charith Asalanka, and an earlier edge. These errors allowed Pakistan to maintain momentum on a pitch offering little after early swing.

Chameera was Sri Lanka's only wicket-taker, finishing with 2-58 in 10 overs. The rest struggled: Asitha Fernando leaked 66 in 8.2 overs without success, Pramod Madushan conceded 62 in eight, while Wanindu Hasaranga, usually a threat, went wicketless for 35 in 10. Captain Asalanka's part-time spin and Janith Liyanage's medium pace offered no control.

Babar, initially cautious, grew in confidence. He reached fifty off 66 balls with a short-arm jab through point, then accelerated with trademark cover drives and pulls. Rizwan, joining at 177-2, rotated strike expertly before raising his fifty with a steer to deep midwicket.

The winning runs came off Asitha in the 49th over — Babar guiding a low full toss to cover. The pair walked off grinning, series sealed.

Earlier, having starred with the ball in the opener, Haris Rauf was at it again as Pakistan restricted Sri Lanka to 288-8.

The pacer, who finished with 3-66, responded each time when called upon, especially when Sri Lanka were threatening to post an even bigger total where he picked up two quick wickets to snuff out their hopes.

Haris' spell at the end came after leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed (3-41) had ripped through Sri Lanka's top order; their exploits giving Pakistan a good chance of wrapping up the series despite a valiant half century by Liyanage and 44 by Kamindu Mendis.

The match, initially scheduled for Thursday, was pushed back to Friday after the terror attack in Islamabad on Tuesday, when Pakistan had won the opener at the same venue.

Salman Ali Agha, standing in place of flu-stricken skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi, had opted to bowl after winning the toss and it needed work from fast bowlers Naseem Shah and Mohammad Waseem Jr in the deep to get Pakistan their first breakthrough.

Pathum Nissanka (24) looked good, having hit four boundaries, but was run out attempting a risky third run, with his departure bringing to an end a 51-run opening stand.

Fellow opener Kamil Mishara (27) followed soon after; Rizwan's quickly completing a stumping off Abrar, who sat out the first game due to illness and was returning to the playing XI after a match-winning show against South Africa last week.

Abrar had been difficult to read for Sri Lankan batters and struck again when Kusal Mendis (20) holed out to Mohammad Nawaz inside the circle on the leg-side.

Abrar was hit for the first boundary of his spell when Asalanka swept him away but the leg-spinner hit back on the next ball, trapping the left-hander lbw with a ball that spun away after pitching.

Sri Lanka reached 100 in the 23rd over and the first six of their innings came on the first ball of the 24th when Liyanage came down the track and hit Abrar over the long-on fence.

Abrar was pulled out of the attack and that gave Sri Lanka the breathing space they needed and Liyanage and Sadeera Sameerawickrama (42) settled soon after.

When the latter got his third boundary with a flick off Nawaz in the 29th, Salman felt Pakistan needed to change tact. Haris was called into action and the pacer, fresh from picking up four wickets in the opening ODI, responded by cleaning up Sameerawickrama, who also hit a six, with a length ball that hit the top of his off-stump and ended a 61-run stand.

The incoming Kamindu launched Haris for a six and with the more sedate Liyanage took Sri Lanka to 200 in the 38th over. Pakistan turned to Abrar once again but Kamindu swatted him away for four as Sri Lanka set themselves up for a late charge.

Spinner Nawaz was plundered for 14 in the 41st over where Liyanage raising his half-century off 56 deliveries and Kamindu getting his second six. But Haris broke the 73-run partnership when he had Kamindu, who hit four fours during his 38-ball stay, caught at the square leg fence.

Liyanage fell in the next over, hitting Waseem to Nawaz at midwicket before Haris trapped Chameera. Hasaranga's unbeaten 37 ensured Sri Lanka set Pakistan 289 to win.

Scoreboard

SRI LANKA:
P. Nissanka run out ... 24
K. Mishara st Rizwan b Abrar ... 27
K. Mendis c Nawaz b Abrar ... 20
S. Samarawickrama b Haris ... 42
C. Asalanka lbw b Abrar ... 6
J. Liyanage c Nawaz b Wasim ... 54
K.D. Mendis c Saim b Haris ... 44
W. Hasaranga not out ... 37
D. Chameera lbw b Haris ... 0
P. Madushan not out ... 11
EXTRAS (LB-9, W-14) ... 23
TOTAL (for eight wickets, 50 overs) ... 288
DID NOT BAT: A. Fernando
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-51 (Nissanka), 2-62 (Mishara), 3-90 (K. Mendis), 4-98 (Asalanka), 5-159 (Samarawickrama), 6-232 (K.D. Mendis), 7-241 (Liyanage), 8-244 (Chameera)
BOWLING: Naseem 10-1-63-0 (3w), Haris 10-0-66-3 (7w), Wasim 10-0-50-1 (4w), Abrar 10-0-41-3, Nawaz 7-0-44-0, Saim 3-0-15-0
PAKISTAN:
Fakhar Zaman c Liyanage b Chameera ... 78
Saim Ayub c Asalanka b Chameera ... 33
Babar Azam not out ... 102
Mohammad Rizwan not out ... 51
EXTRAS (B-1, LB-5, NB-1, W-18) ... 25
TOTAL (for two wickets, 48.2 overs) ... 289
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-77 (Saim), 2-177 (Fakhar)
DID NOT BAT: Salman Ali Agha (c), Hussain Talat, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah, Abrar Ahmed
BOWLING: Fernando 8.2-0-66-0 (1w, 1nb), Madushan 8-0-62-0 (5w), Chameera 10-0-58-2 (2w), Asalanka 6-0-33-0, Hasaranga 10-0-35-0, Liyanage 4-0-13-0 (1w), K.D. Mendis 2-0-16-0 (1w)
RESULT: Pakistan won by eight wickets.
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Babar Azam

Pakistan fans laud gesture from SL cricketers

RAWALPINDI: The Sri Lankan team received massive support from the crowd in the second ODI here at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday as fans termed their decision of continuing with the Pakistan tour a victory for the game.

A significant number of fans holding Sri Lanakan flags supported the tourists throughout the game. The PCB also affixed Sri Lankan and Pakistan flags in all the stands.

According to some media reports that emerged on Wednesday, eight members of the touring Sri Lankan cricket squad wanted to return home citing security concerns in the aftermath of the bomb blast that killed 12 in Islamabad last week. However, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) managed to convinced the said players to continue with the tour, while assuring that the tourists will be given foolproof security.

Mohammad Talha, a fan from Murree, said that he was upset when he heard that some Sri Lankan cricketers wanted to return home.

"Literally, I was shocked as I thought this act by the Srl Lankan [players] will leave very negative impact on future international [cricket] events in Pakistan. However, I became super happy when I came to know that no Sri Lankan player is going back," he said while talking to *Dawn* and added that he along with his friends decided to watch the second ODI at the stadium.

He continued, "Let me pay special thanks to Sri Lanka Cricket [board], their government and above all, all the team members."

Arshad Hussain, a fan from Rawalpindi, also appreciated the Islanders, stating that they had won the hearts of sports lovers.

"Pakistan always provides appropriate security to touring [sports] squads. [For the ongoing series] foolproof arrangements are already in place. Therefore, touring teams shouldn't be worried about security," he said.—Kashif Abbasi

PAKISTAN fans hold Sri Lankan flags during the second ODI. —White Star

PCB confirms six-city shortlist for two new PSL teams

LAHORE: The two new franchise teams of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) will be named from among Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad and Sialkot, the country's cricket board announced on Friday.

The list was finalised after the valuation reports for the two new teams were received by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the board said in a press release, adding that the tender process for the sale of ownership rights "will be formally initiated shortly".

The PCB also confirmed that the independent valuation process for the existing PSL franchises and other commercial assets has been completed.

Following the conclusion of this exercise, the board said, "renewal offer letters reflecting the new franchise fees for the next 10 years have been formally shared with all compliant PSL franchises, requesting them to revert with their decision within the stipulated timeline".

"To ensure full transparency and facilitate a clear understanding of the valuations, the PCB has also arranged collective and individual meetings between franchise representatives and the independent valuer (EY MENA)," the statement added.

"These sessions will allow the franchises to review the valuation methodology and discuss any queries."—Sports Reporter

Bangladesh thrash Ireland in first Test

SYLHET: Bangladesh wrapped up a dominant innings-and-47-run victory over Ireland shortly after lunch on the fourth day of the Sylhet Test on Friday, sealing their 24th win in the format.

Debutant left-arm spinner Hasan Murad starred with 4-60, while Taijul Islam finished with 3-84, including the final wicket of Barry McCarthy, as Ireland were dismissed for 254 in their second innings.

Bangladesh had taken firm control of the game with a massive first-innings total of 587-8 declared in reply to Ireland's 286.

Ireland tried to unsettle the spinners after they resumed on Friday morning with an aggressive sweep-heavy approach.

Andy McBrine resisted with a gritty 52 off 106 balls, his fifth Test half-century, but received little support until a late counterattack from McCarthy (25) and debutant Jordan Neil (36).

McCarthy and Neil added 54 runs for the ninth wicket to delay Bangladesh's victory charge.

Hasan, who took two wickets late on day three, returned to trap Irish captain Andy Balbirnie (38) with a full delivery.

Balbirnie, who did not bat on the third evening due to a finger injury, came in at number eight.

The star for Bangladesh in the match was opener Mahmudul Hasan Joy who slammed a career-best 171.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto made 100, his eighth Test century and fourth as captain, equalling Mushfiqur Rahim's tally as Bangladesh skipper.

Shadman Islam (80), Mominul Haque (80) and Liton Das (60) also contributed with the bat, while Humphreys finished with 5-170 — his second five-wicket haul.—AFP

Sinner extends unbeaten run with ATP Finals win over Shelton

TURIN: Reigning champion Jannik Sinner extended his indoor hardcourt winning streak to 29 matches with a 6-3, 7-6(7/3) victory over American Ben Shelton in their dead rubber round-robin match at the ATP Finals in Turin on Friday.

There was a relaxed atmosphere in the Inalpi Arena as the Italian had already secured top spot in the Bjorn Borg Group and a semi-final against Alex de Minaur on Saturday, while Shelton had been eliminated after losing his two previous matches.

Shelton was broken in the opening and closing games of the first set, unable to take advantage of a break point at 2-1 down while Sinner was always capable of pulling out an ace at the crucial time, hitting two in that fourth game to hold serve.

The American put up more fight in the second set, serving to love on three occasions, rescuing a match point at 5-4 down and forcing Sinner into a tiebreak before the Italian sealed the win.

Sinner's chances of ending the year as world number one evaporated on Thursday when Carlos Alcaraz completed a clean sweep in the Jimmy Connors Group with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Lorenzo Musetti, leaving little at stake against Shelton apart from his unbeaten run.

Before Sinner and Shelton emerged, Alcaraz was presented on court with the ATP year-end world number one trophy, which the Italian won last year, and the pair may yet do battle one last time in 2025 in Sunday's final.

Earlier on Thursday, when Alcaraz and Musetti were shown on the giant screen as they arrived at the Inalpi Arena, there were huge cheers for the Italian and boos for the Spaniard. However, when they walked onto the court for their showdown, the Spaniard was greeted by warm applause.

Alcaraz took time to settle and hit a total of 21 unforced errors, while Musetti more than held his own in the opening set. He won two service games to love before being broken in a nerve-jangling final game of the set that stretched to over 11 minutes.

After that, it was business as usual for Alcaraz as he broke Musetti in successive service games to race into a 5-1 lead.

Even though the crowd loudly cheered every point won by Musetti, he had no answer once the Spaniard upped his game.

"This tournament is really important for me," said Alcaraz. "I'm excited about qualifying for the semi-finals."—Reuters

CM Murad ignites countdown to 35th National Games

KARACHI: A wave of electric excitement swept over Karachi on Friday as the metropolis hosted the momentous torch relay ceremony performed by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for the 35th National Games, to be held from Dec 6 to 13 in Karachi.

This magnificent spectacle, which was held at the sacred Mazar-e-Quaid, was presided over by the CM who officially launched the countdown to the Games which will be held at 24 venues.

The flame, a symbol of hope and sportsmanship, was ceremonially passed from the hands of international athletes to CM Murad.

"Karachi has the unparalleled honour to host the National Games after nearly two decades. Therefore, it must be organised in a befitting and memorable manner," Chief Minister Murad declared during his address.

"The Sindh government believes promoting sports is essential for engaging youth in healthy, constructive activities. Hosting the 35th National Games will be a proud moment, not only for Sindh but for the entire country," he added.

"Today we stand before the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, where the first National Olympic event was held," he recalled.

The CM recalled that the first National Olympics were inaugurated in Karachi in 1948 by Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of the nation, himself.

"The first [National Games] trophy was donated by Quaid-e-Azam, and to this day the winners [of the Games] receive the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy," he added.

While highlighting that Karachi has hosted the highest number of National Games, Murad expressed full confidence in the success of the upcoming edition.

"On behalf of the Government of Sindh, its Sports Department and the entire administration, I assure you that the 35th National Games will be a resounding success," he insisted.

"I hope Karachiites will fill every venue. These Games will be among the most successful National Games Pakistan has ever seen.

The CM continued, "Today, the National Games torch has arrived in Karachi from Quetta [previous host], and from here it will move to Peshawar — the host of the next National Games."

After pledging that the Sindh government would ensure world-class arrangements for the National Games, the CM concluded his address with the slogan 'Pakistan Zindabad'.

The ceremony, which began with the recitation of the holy Quran and the national anthem, was charged with patriotic fervour. Students, Olympic representatives, and dignitaries watched as the Balochistan Olympic Association formally handed over the torch, officially transferring the hosting baton to the CM of Sindh.

CM Murad passed the torch to Sindh Sports Minister Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar, unleashing the flame upon its epic journey. The torch will be carried along Karachi's most significant routes, a beacon of light for the City of Lights. In a spectacular first, it will be borne across the Arabian Sea aboard a ship before commencing its nationwide relay to other provinces.

The CM on the occasion also unveiled the logo for the 35th National Games, underscoring the historical significance of the event.

The Games will bring together more than 11,000 athletes and officials from all provinces and major departments including Army, Navy, Air Force, Wapda, Police and the HEC.

A total of 34 sports, covering both Olympic and non-Olympic events, from archery and athletics to rowing and rugby.

After crisscrossing the nation, the flame will return to Karachi for the grand opening ceremony at the National Stadium on Dec 6, to be presided over by President Asif Ali Zardari. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be the chief guest at the Dec 13 closing ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister announced that the Youth Olympics would be organised by the provincial sports department biennially for the youth,

Minister of Sports Sardar Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar and President Pakistan Olympic Association also spoke on the occasion. Secretary of Sports Munawar Mahesar and others from the sports department and the Sindh Olympics were also present on the occasion.—Agencies